

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 SP-02 ICA-11 AID-05 EB-08
NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15 STR-07 OMB-01 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 FRB-03 INR-10 NSAE-00 XMB-02 OPIC-03
LAB-04 SIL-01 /101 W
-----052342 181538Z /41

R 180200Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0087
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
AMEMBASSY MANILA

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EO 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, SN, BG, CE
SUBJ: SINGAPORE AS AN EXAMPLE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
FOR COMMONWEALTH REGIONAL MEMBERS BANGLADESH AND
SRI LANKA

1. SUMMARY: RECENT VISIT OF BANGLADESH MINISTER OF
PLANNING TO SINGAPORE AND VISIT OF SINGAPORE PRIME
MINISTER TO SRI LANKA TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC AND TECHNICAL
COOPERATION ARE RESULT OF DISCUSSIONS AT FEBRUARY
REGIONAL COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IN SYDNEY AND INTEREST
ON THE PART OF THE OTHER TWO COUNTRIES IN SINGAPORE
AS A MODEL OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. BANGLADESH MINISTER OF PLANNING, DR. M. N. HUDA,
ARRIVED IN SINGAPORE ON APRIL 9 AS HEAD OF A FIVE-MAN
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DELEGATION TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE
TWO COUNTRIES. DURING ITS FIVE DAY VISIT THE DELEGATION
CALLED ON THE PRESIDENT, PRIME MINISTER AND FINANCE
MINISTER. OTHER VISITS INCLUDED THE ECONOMIC DEVELOP-
MENT BOARD, DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, HOUSING AND DEVELOP-
MENT BOARD, AND THE DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SINGAPORE. AT
A DINNER HOSTED BY PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW FOR

DR HUDA, THE AMBASSADOR WAS TOLD THAT THE VISIT HAD GROWN OUT OF DISCUSSIONS AT THE REGIONAL COMMONWEALTH CONFERENCE IN SYDNEY IN FEBRUARY, AND THAT THE DELEGATION WAS INVESTIGATING THE SINGAPORE EXPERIENCE AS A MODEL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND WAS LOOKING AT JOINT INVESTMENT PROJECTS (TEXTILES, TIMBER AND KNOCK-DOWN FURNITURE MENTIONED) AS A SPECIFIC MEANS OF COOPERATION AND TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER. HUDA STATED HIS INTENTION TO MAKE FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN BANGLADESH MORE ATTRACTIVE, MENTIONING POSSIBLE ESTABLISHMENT OF FREE TRADE ZONE.

3. SINGAPORE PRIME MINISTER LEE KUAN YEW IS MAKING AN OFFICIAL VISIT TO SRI LANKA APRIL 16-19 AT THE INVITATION OF PRIME MINISTER J.R. JAYEWARDENE. HE IS ACCOMPANIED BY MRS LEE, THE MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND THE SENIOR MINISTERS OF STATE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND FINANCE. THIS VISIT ALSO DEVELOPED FROM DISCUSSIONS AT THE COMMONWEALTH REGIONAL CONFERENCE, AND INTEREST IN SINGAPORE AS AN ECONOMIC MODEL. ACCORDING TO MFA OFFICIALS, PRIME MINISTER JAYEWARDENE STOPPED IN SINGAPORE FOR ONE DAY AS PRIME MINISTER LEE'S GUEST ON HIS RETURN FROM SYDNEY TO COLOMBO, AND IS INTERESTED IN FURTHER EXPLORING ECONOMIC COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS BEEN TECHNICAL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES FOR SOME TIME, TRADE IS LIMITED. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE: COMMENT: GOS MINISTER FOR LAW AND ENVIRONMENT BARKER WAS APPROACHED BY SRI LANKANS LAST YEAR AT LAW CONFERENCE IN CALGARY FOR ADVICE ON LEGALITIES OF ESTABLISHING FREE TRADE ZONE. PM LEE KUAN YEW HAS TOLD AMBASSADOR THAT GOS IS READY AND WILLING TO HELP, BUT THAT HE IS SKEPTICAL ABOUT FEASIBILITY OF INTEGRATING FREE TRADE ZONE INTO SRI LANKA'S HEAVILY CONTROLLED ECONOMY. REGARDING SUGGESTION FOR INDUSTRIAL JOINT VENTURES, GOS MIGHT POSSIBLY UNDERTAKE SOME MINOR PARTICIPATION (E.G., THROUGH DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SINGAPORE), BUT WE WOULD BE SURPRISED IF ANY SIZEABLE JOINT PROJECTS EVOLVE. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE.
HOLDRIGE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, INTELLIGENCE ASSESSMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 apr 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978SINGAP01748
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780165-1118
Format: TEL
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780444/aaaablnl.tel
Line Count: 111
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: e98807ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2932022
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SINGAPORE AS AN EXAMPLE OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FOR COMMONWEALTH REGIONAL MEMBERS BANGLADESH AND SRI LANKA
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, SN, BG, CE
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/e98807ac-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014